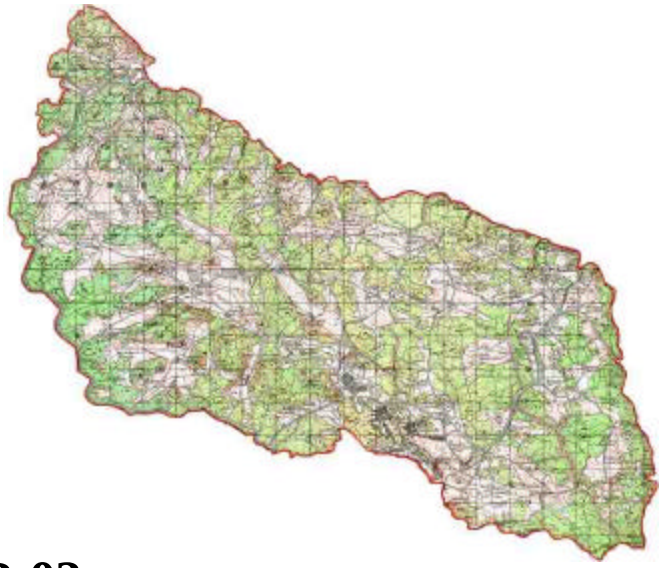
Combat Maneuver Training Center

News from the "Box"



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DISCLAIMER

This CMTC publication is not a doctrinal product and is not intended to serve as a program to guide the conduct of operations and training. The information and lessons herein are the perceptions of those individuals involved in military exercises, activities, and real-world events. Our intent is to share knowledge, support discussion and impart lessons and information in an expeditious manner.

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FOREWORD

The Combat Maneuver Training Center's News from the "Box" is a new format designed to provide USAREUR Brigade and Battalion Commanders with information that will assist them in preparing and fighting their units during rotations at CMTC. These articles highlight critical areas where we see negative trends developing. My intent is to provide you with Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) that CMTC's senior Observer Controllers (OCs) feel will help reverse these trends for your units.

Training Objectives. CMTC designs each rotation based on the training unit's needs and requests. These are provided to CMTC through the Division Training Letter and the subordinate unit's Training Objectives. The importance of these Training Objectives is three-fold. First, they provide the unit direction. Second, they allow CMTC to design and build a rotation that addresses the real training needs of the unit. Third, they focus the O/C teams' energies on the needs of the unit. We need your help in making training at CMTC the most productive event of the year for a unit.

TOC Operations. A unit's TOC has six critical doctrinal functions. A failure in any one of these areas is manifested throughout the entire unit during their force-on-force training at CMTC. When preparing the TOC for CMTC, consider each of the four areas that contribute to the TOC's success: Personnel, Training, Supply, and Maintenance. By addressing the issues in each of these areas, commanders have a positive impact on not only the TOC, but on the entire unit's operations.

Leadership. Command leadership is the single most important factor in fighting and winning at CMTC or in any combat environment. As commander, you set the unit's tone and personality for all that it must accomplish. These insightful techniques, when applied to the characteristics of Command Leadership, will assist you in becoming the driving force behind setting the conditions necessary for success on the battlefield.

I strongly urge commanders to take a few minutes, read these articles and relate them to your outfits. Sustain your strong points and concentrate your training efforts on those weaknesses that you recognize from these articles. Your goal is to be combat ready. CMTC's mission is to help you attain that goal.

Train to win!

Original Signed (14 MAR 02)
GREGORY A. STONE
COL, AR
Commanding

Training Objectives, et cetera.

By LTC James B. Hickey, Mustang 07,
Brigade Senior Observer/Controller, CMTC

"The objective … is unquestionably the most important of all the principles of war. It is the connecting link which, alone, can impart coherence to war…Without the objective, all other principles are pointless. It gives the commander the "what." The other principles are guides in the "How."

Admiral C.R. Brown, USN:
The Principles of War, June 1949[1]

Introduction:

The aim of this article is to impress upon the reader the importance of developing and pursuing specific, well tailored training objectives while preparing for and conducting collective training at the Army's combat training centers (CTC).

It is my opinion that well designed, timely and clearly communicated training objectives are some of the most important tools a brigade or task force commander can use to fully exploit the resources and conditions of a CTC. These objectives give focus and help ensure unity of effort. They help the commander achieve his visualized training and readiness end states.

I intend to express the above with a concise review of doctrinal and regulatory guidance; observations from several brigade rotations at the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC); and recommendations for commanders. I wish to inform and advise.

Our Guide Posts:

There is no shortage of guidance for the ends, ways and means of training at the CTCs. We are well provided with regulations, doctrine, policy, and yearly guidance. The 350-50 series regulations at Army, US Army Europe (USAREUR) and US Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) serve as a foundation for actions at the CMTC, National Training Center (NTC) and Joint Readiness Center (JRTC). Each directs commanders to develop either strategies or mission essential task lists to guide training at the CTCs.

In the case of USAREUR, Seventh Army Training Command has promulgated a Regulation 350-50 (Draft) that, in addition to METL, troop lists, etc., requires divisional headquarters to provide the training objectives of the training units in a "160 Day Letter";

[1] Robert Debs Heinl, Jr., Colonel, USMC, ret., **Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotations** (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1966) p.218.

Training objectives for units participating. Specific unit training objectives enables CMTC to start developing a scenario that accomplishes the training unit intent and objectives for the rotation. It is very important that all units participating in the rotation have specific quantifiable objectives that present a clear picture on what the training unit wants to focus on in the rotation.

Page A-2, Appendix A,
USAREUR/7A Reg. 350-50 (Draft)
10 January 2000

All of the above supports Army Regulation 350-1, Army Training, 1 August 1983. In the case of USAREUR, USAREUR Regulation 350-50, Combat Maneuver Training Center, 4 August 1994 and Seventh Army Training Command Regulation 350-50 (Draft), 10 January 2000 complements and supports both the USAREUR Command Training Philosophy, 1 June 2001 and USAREUR Command Training Guidance, FY 01-02.

Fundamental to this entire discussion is the Army's corner stone doctrine for training. FM 25-100, Training the Force and FM 25-101, Battle Focused Training, describe in detail the importance of training objectives and how to develop them. It is these documents that serve as the "line of departure" for guidance. Below I shall outline what these manuals recommend.

Training objectives [defined]: *A statement that described the desired outcome of a training activity. A training objective consists of the following:*

(1) Task. A clearly defined and measurable activity accomplished by individuals or organizations.

(2) Condition(s). The circumstances and environment in which a task is to be performed.

(3) Standard. The minimum acceptable proficiency required in the performance of a particular training task.

Glossary-7, FM 25-100.

The above specifies that a training objective is an expression of a task, condition(s) and standard. The commander states his training objectives after having determined his mission essential task list (METL). The METL is a function of a commander's analysis after having reviewed his war plans and external directives [i.e. mission training plans (MTP), mobilization plans, installation wartime transition and deployment plans, force integration plans, yearly training guidance from higher headquarters, etc.].

From his METL a commander can identify the many "battle tasks" that must be completed to standard for a mission essential task to be successfully accomplished. These battle tasks, after selection by the senior commander, are the purview of both subordinate units and staffs. These tasks are very often on the METL of these same subordinate units and staffs.

After a review and approval of subordinate organizations' METLs, the senior leader selects battle tasks. A battle task is a command group, staff, or subordinate organization mission essential task that is so critical that its accomplishment will determine the success of the next higher organization's mission essential task. Battle tasks are selected for each mission essential task on the METL. Battle tasks allow the senior commander to define the training tasks that -

- Integrate the battlefield operating systems.
- Receive the highest priority for resources such as ammunition, training areas and facilities, material, and funds.
- Receive emphasis during evaluations directed by the senior headquarters.

Page 2-7, FM 25-100.

Our doctrine emphasizes that this methodology is key to ensuring our training is "battle focused"; " the process of deriving peace time training requirements from war time missions." What is key is our Army's acknowledgement that both time and resources for training are limited.

Units can not achieve and sustain proficiency on all possible soldier, leader, and collective tasks…Commanders must selectively identify and train those tasks that accomplish the units war time mission. The METL serves as a focal point on which commanders plan, execute and assess training. This is critical throughout the entire training process and aids commanders in allocating resources for training.

Page 1-10, FM 25-101.

[C]ommanders can achieve a successful training program by consciously narrowing the focus to a reduced number of vital tasks…

Page 1-7, FM 25-100.

This guidance is unequivocal. It is also easier said than done. This is particularly the case given the Army's role in helping our nation meet its strategic challenges. Gone are the days when our Army's units could outline wartime missions in general defense plans under mid- to high-intensity conditions against specific threats on specific locations. With the notable exception of our forces in South Korea, most units today must be prepared to deploy to any region and execute operational duties against many threats.

Further, units must be prepared to operate not only in mid to high intensity conditions but also in low intensity or peaceful conditions. This reality means large, conventional units routinely deploy to the Balkans and other locations after extended periods of training to maintain peace and stability. Tasks, especially collective tasks, associated with these missions are for the most part very different from the tasks brigades, regiments, battalions and squadrons conduct in combat. As a result METLs dramatically change from year to year for many large combat units.

Even within a mid- to high-intensity combat scenario the METLs of our Army's deployable units are rather broad (e.g. deploy, attack, defend, sustain, protect the force, redeploy, etc.). Further, the tasks are very often not put into the context of a specific geographical or operational area against a defined threat. We are now an Army that must be ready to fight anywhere against any threat on very short notice.

It is the above set of realities that give relevance to our Army's training doctrine. Given the many demands, uncertainties and limits each of our units face today, command direction for training is vital. This direction, the product of imagination and professional experience, is what can provide units purpose, unity of action and economy.

This is why our doctrine respects the commander's prerogative and responsibility to make assessments and tailor training. Training objectives and their clear definitions are the "ways" a commander can use to achieve his visualized training and readiness end state.

Observations:

Very often unit commanders deploy to the CMTC without having fully thought through and communicated what it is they intend on accomplishing by the end of the training exercise. For those who do, rarely do they outline how they intend on getting there. The clear communication of training objectives in terms of task, condition and standard is never heard or seen. As a result little focus is provided for both subordinates and observer/controllers.

Subordinates are thus not armed with success criteria against which to take action. They lack a training "intent" that lays out "key tasks" and an "end state". For many, getting by each day or mission without having made a noticeable error defines success. The military decision making process is endured, preparations made, engagements fought, and after action reviews survived in a grinding and exhausting cycle. What is noticed and learned is sometimes only a fortune of the battlefield or the admonition of the observer/controller.

This by itself does not make for an unsuccessful rotation. In fact, without exception all units, leaders and individual soldiers depart the training exercise skilled in tasks essential to winning in sustained land combat. The series of mission essential tasks that all units execute at the CMTC invariably improve all training units. Learning is unavoidable.

The issue in question is the rate of learning and level of readiness achieved. What is also in question is whether what is being learned is pursuant to the commander's will or vision (e.g. skill in a specified battle task or the development of peculiar standard operating procedures).

Below are challenges that are routinely observed each rotation:

- 160 day letters do not express training objectives in terms of tasks, conditions and standards. What is most often seen are METLs. Though these METLs certainly assist in developing a rotational schedule that provides a logical sequence of engagements they do not allow for the development of peculiar conditions. Furthermore, identified battle tasks that are viewed as key are rarely identified.

- Pre-rotation “counter part” interviews do not always result in a clear expression of what a commander or staff officer would like from the O/C. Rarely do O/Cs receive requests to focus observations and after action reviews.

- BCTs do not develop detailed training plans for brigade troops and attachments. This results in many small units (i.e. military police platoons, reconnaissance troops, signal detachments, electronic warfare sections, etc.) losing training opportunities or being given aimless tasks during periods allocated for platoon/company-level situational training exercises (STX) and battalion task force-level field training exercises (FTX).

- BCTs and battalion task forces do not fully exploit the conditions of pre-FTX command post exercises (CPX) to develop practical techniques and procedures for their respective command posts. We do not fully exploit these CPXs pursuing specific training objectives intended to institute or further develop the functions of our tactical operations centers so as to better prepare ourselves for the subsequent FTX.

Recommendations:

I recommend that commanders view a rotation at a CTC as an invaluable “means” by which to achieve stated readiness and training goals. These exercises are to be exploited.
Using malice of forethought, commanders should state clear training objectives that are intended to develop specific skills in specific parts of their organizations or attributes in identified leaders. Granted, brigade or battalion/squadron commanders cannot necessarily set conditions of training at the CTC, he can, however, do much to direct the actions of his subordinates toward his chosen battle tasks.

Further, these same commanders can provide focus for the O/C team with which he trains. O/Cs observe much and if left to their own devices can incessantly provide commentary on all. The challenge for the commander is to co-opt his O/C and direct the energies of this experienced and knowledgeable professional on specific issues that are key to the successful accomplishment of his many training objectives. This effort can do much to guide agendas for the sequence of after action reviews and the resultant learning process.

This effort should, of course, be conducted within the context of a yearly and quarterly training strategy. Tactical and training doctrine should be used as a guide in developing training objectives for each identified battle tasks. The selection of battle tasks in and of themselves is a means by which a commander can set the agenda.

Specific recommendations:

- Identify specific battle tasks for units, leaders and individuals. Each task must be carefully chosen by the commander. Each must support a specific mission essential task. Seek approval and support in the commanders’ training assessment process.

- Given a set of battle tasks, develop a set of training objectives for each (i.e. task, conditions and standard). Communicate these training objectives to the command and fix responsibilities for their successful accomplishment. BCT and task force/squadron training objectives should be included in the "160 day letter".

- For every battle task develop a training strategy for each that exploits the conditions of training at the CTC. This is of key importance for brigade troops, command posts and attachments. Multi-echelon training is the order of the day. This is particularly the case for developing capabilities in specific battlefield operating systems.

- Outline battle tasks, training objectives and strategies with one's O/C before the rotation in the "counter part interview". Provide guidance for the O/C to focus observations, feedback and after action reviews.

Below are examples of suggested battle tasks a commander may wish to use to begin formulating a CTC training strategy. These are identified challenges that many units and leaders face while conducting training at the CTCs. Many have been identified as "trends" over the years.

- Sustainable employment of the brigade reconnaissance troop forward of the brigade main body.

- Unity of command within brigade security zones forward of the forward edge of the battle area.

- Brigade schemes of maneuver that ensure mutual support among task forces and allow for mass at the commander's decisive point.

- Maintaining contact with enemy forces and battle hand over among friendly units in offensive, defensive and security operations. This includes forward and rearward passages of lines.

- Employment of command posts (i.e. TOC, TAC, ALOC, CTCP, FTCP, etc.) in accordance with doctrinal functions. Validate and update techniques and procedures as outlined in unit standard operating procedures.

- The timely employment of immediate close air support using both direct and indirect methods of control.

- The rapid massing of indirect fires to provide adequate support to units in contact (i.e. fires in support of the close fight).

- Rapid clearance of fires.

- Prevention of fratricide in friendly obstacles.

- Employing a reinforced company team as a brigade advance guard during movement to contact operations.

- Company team/troop/platoon/section/squad actions on contact.

- Company team/troop in-stride breach techniques, tactics and tactical procedures.

- Train leaders to make assessments, offer recommendations, and issue effective orders.

- Development of company team/troop engagement areas that exploit terrain and the massed effects of combined arms. Focus on gaining and maintaining contact with enemy forces; canalizing enemy troops into areas where fires can be massed; the development of reverse slope engagement areas; enfilading direct fires; timely repositioning; positioning of obstacles that reinforce terrain and support the fire plan; and cooperation of infantry and armor.

- Gaining visual contact with the enemy before the enemy initiates physical contact.

- Lethal conduct of fire.

- Combat reporting (i.e. contact reports, spot reports, and commanders' situation reports).

- Timely LOGPACs.

The above is incomplete and only intended to serve as a primer. Much thought and work would be needed to develop a training objective and subsequent training plan for each. Needless to say the Army has clear mission training plans (MTP) for just about all units and tactical tasks. Commanders can readily use them. These MTPs illustrate well-expressed training objectives by task, condition and standard.

The goal or "end" is increased readiness and leader development. The "ways" are the commanders training objectives for a set of battle tasks. Each training objective should be reasonably obtainable given the commander's assessment of the entry training levels of the unit or leader in question. Each objective, if obtained, should also measurably improve the combat power of the brigade, battalion task force or squadron. The "means" (i.e. the simulated combat engagements, the OPFOR, the O/C, the AARs, the CTC terrain, the weather and the time) are there for the taking.

Conclusion:

Our training doctrine, much as the entire body of published doctrine, remains "authoritative but not prescriptive". Much latitude is given to commanders as they implement it in pursuit of objectives during the conduct of missions.

Commanders have a vote as they lead their brigades and task forces through a CTC rotation. A training plan built around a set of clear training objectives that accounts for the conditions of training at the CTCs is well within the purview of a commander to develop. It should be directed toward obtainable and well-visualized readiness goals.

The successful accomplishment of any one training objective or indeed a set of objectives by themselves will not ensure unit readiness. They will however allow for greater unit combat power and leader development. This benefit will also accelerate the rate of learning in subsequent training exercises.

> *Objectives must not be confused with the decisive point of attack, for objectives like rounds of a ladder, they are but means towards attaining a decision.*
>
> *J.F.C. Fuller, Armoured Warfare (1943)*[2]

In the end perhaps the most important result of a commander's timely and well-communicated set of training objectives is the unity of effort it may provide the units leaders and observer controllers. It can also allow for effective and purposeful initiative by subordinates.

[2] Jay M. Shafritz, **Words on War; Military Quotations From Ancient Times To The Present** (New York, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990) p.326.

THE TASK FORCE TACTICAL OPERATIONS CENTER
Thoughts on Preparation for Combat
(Part One)

MAJ Michael S. Higginbottom
CMTC, Timberwolf 03

The functions of the main CP are to monitor and assist in command and control by maintaining contact and coordination with higher and adjacent units, continuously updating the enemy situation, planning operations, analyzing and disseminating tactical information, maintaining situation maps, and requesting and synchronizing additional CS and CSS for the battle. Factors that have immediate operational impact must be monitored by the main CP and communicated to the Commander.

FM 71-2
THE TANK AND MECHANIZED INFANTRY
BATTALION TASK FORCE

Observation

During force on force operations at the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC), Task Force (TF) Tactical Operations Centers (TOCs) often struggle to fulfill their roles as information hubs within the task force and a tool with which the TF commander can "see himself", thereby synchronizing combat power. Further, this inability to collect and process information from subordinate elements prevents the TOC from performing higher-level functions such as conducting analysis and ultimately, providing recommendations to the TF commander at critical moments during the fight.

The level of preparation for combat operations and the subsequent success of a Task Force TOC, like any military unit, does not have a singular measure. It is a product of many interrelated factors. Each factor is a separate measure of the battalion/task force's (BN/TF) relative proficiency within a larger system, such as personnel, training, supply, and maintenance. Often, units deploy to CMTC with unrealistic self-assessments of their TOC proficiency, failing to adequately identify and correct shortcomings within each system prior to deployment. Consequently, a trend observed at CMTC is that within several days after introduction to sustained combat operations, the TOC-internal friction caused by command post (CP) systemic weaknesses magnifies itself across the task force. TOCs are unable to perform the following CP functions:

Receive information / Process information
Distribute information
Analyze information
Submit recommendations to the commander
Integrate resources
Synchronize resources

Ultimately, the entire task force, from commander to rifleman, becomes severely hindered by the compounded friction of restrictive terrain, difficult weather conditions, a well-trained opposing force (OPFOR) and the TOC's inability to perform its doctrinal functions. Therefore, it is imperative that

TOCs prepare for combat at the CMTC through a holistic approach, addressing each system and understanding that changes in any one system will most likely require adjustments in others.

Personnel

As one might deduce, there are a host of issues within the personnel system; these may include such problems as manning (too few or too many), and military occupational skill (MOS) mismatches. Task forces often deploy with several staff sections short personnel. With a unit status report (USR) objective of manning weapon systems at squad, platoon, and company levels, the staff sections may deploy with shortages of carrier drivers, radiotelephone operators (RTOs), assistant operations sergeants (OPS SGTs), or liaison officers (LNOs). While it is hard to prioritize personnel shortages across the battalion, command and control should always be of paramount concern, since its loss has such dramatic effects. It is imperative that TOCs deploy as near to full strength as possible, given overall manning levels.

An addendum to this issue is the nature of battalion staff soldier selection within the unit. TOCs are frequently undermanned due to the inability of command posts to deploy with their entire staff section due to medical profiles, UCMJ actions, and other administrative actions/requirements. It becomes clear during discussions with TOC non-commissioned officers (NCOs) that some units allow line companies to transfer soldiers with discipline problems or long-term medical challenges to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), which in turn assigns them to staff sections. Again, most BN/TF commanders will agree that command and control is a paramount concern. Therefore, commanders must consult with their command sergeants major (CSM) to make staff soldier selection a top manning priority. Top quality professional NCOs and soldiers are absolutely essential if a commander wants his TOC to be a combat multiplier. TF TOCS need handpicked soldiers capable of working in high-stress environments, and who can quickly master information systems-oriented subject matter.

Equally as challenging as undermanned TOCs are those that deploy with excess personnel. Often, vehicle battle rosters do not realistically reflect current manning. TOC vehicle seating capacity is exceeded with too many bodies and not enough spaces. The TOC can become unwieldy when attempting to displace in order to maintain communications with subordinate elements. These TOCs cannot displace in a single-echeloned movement and must leave personnel and equipment behind for subsequent trips. An excess of personnel without solid standard operating procedures (SOPs) can also lead to unclear divisions of labor, resulting in degradation of performance rather than the intended increase. More is not always better. This is often the case with junior officers. An excess of lieutenants manifests itself in the battalion's operations section as a "lieutenant platoon." These officers are often untrained in CP operations, and unclear of their specific responsibilities; they do not contribute to the CP functions listed above, and are in essence, "dead weight."

Training

The modern day reality at battalion level is that the only battalion officers who may have graduated from an officer advanced course and spend any significant time at the Task Force TOC are the TF Commander, Executive Officer (XO), and Operations Officer (S3). It is very common to see senior first lieutenants or newly promoted captains filling all remaining staff positions. These officers received very limited military decision-making process (MDMP) training during their officer basic courses. Most of their staff skills must come from on-the-job training. Therefore, it is even more

imperative in this environment that our NCOs have formal training in staff operations and the MDMP, not only to assist in the operation of the CP, but also to teach junior officers in much the same way that good platoon sergeants develop young platoon leaders. Battalions must make completion of the Battle Staff Non-Commissioned Officer Course (BSNCO) a priority. Units that have professional TOC NCOs who are BSNCO graduates are able to execute CP functions better, faster, and more professionally than those that don't. See Call Newsletter No. 01-4, Feb 01, Appendix B, *Battle Staff Noncommissioned Officers*.

RTOs are often untrained in proper procedures and do not know or understand doctrinal language. They are inadequately briefed by their NCOs or battle captains on the significance of a particular piece of information or report and therefore unable to identify the Commander's Critical Information Requirements (CCIR) when reports are received. They often have not received a TOC-section OPORD. Therefore, they don't know the relative enemy situation; when the TOC will change configurations, or any information that we would normally want our riflemen to know about their platoon missions. These well-meaning soldiers are not trusted agents on the BN/TF command net. Officers are quick to snatch the hand mike away from them to answer the net or make a query to a company commander. Within a few days after the onset of combat operations, the officers or senior NCOs have become the 'de facto' RTOs. This leads to additional challenges because more senior TOC personnel are now consumed in information reception instead of processing and analysis. The result is a failure to synchronize resources in accordance with the commander's vision and absence of any relevant recommendations to the commander during the critical points of the fight. RTOs need to be trained on proper procedures, allowed to develop during home station training and CPXs, and empowered to run the TF nets. TOC soldiers must receive an OPORD before every mission just like every other soldier in the task force. Finally, RTOs need CCIR explained to them so they can recognize it when it is reported. FM rehearsals conducted by the OPS NCO will reinforce to RTOs what a CCIR is and what it sounds like on the net.

Because of the reasons stated above, a unit can inadvertently develop a TOC where NCOs and soldiers are responsible for TOC set up, security, and generator fueling, but not much more. Units that have TOC SOPs that clearly define roles and responsibilities of all members, have well-trained NCOs and soldiers that are empowered to run operations, and have officers that delegate responsibility are those that operate much more effectively. TF OPS SGTs need to take charge of the entire TOC, not just the S3 section. TF XOs need to lay down the law with all TOC sections and attached elements, enforcing the point that the OPS SGT speaks for him on all TOC-specific issues. This requires clear agreement on standards and SOPs, and also requires close coordination between the TF XO, S3, and the OPS SGT. Sometimes, TF XOs and S3s have conflicting views on ownership in the TOC, and clash over what is in each of their lanes. TF commanders must make sure that all three of these critical leaders at the TOC know their roles and responsibilities.

During sustained combat operations, LNOs are extremely critical to the battle rhythm of the TOC. Staying abreast of the brigade's MDMP, as well as that of adjacent units, is absolutely essential. Despite this importance, unit LNOs are often newly assigned junior officers lacking experience, maturity, and in some cases, the drive required to ensure that the TF commander's requirements or concerns are clearly articulated outside the task force. Properly trained, experienced LNOs, who have earned the trust of the brigade plans officer and developed a working relationship with the brigade staff, are very successful in keeping their TF commander and XO informed and are much more likely

to ensure that the task force's requests for information (RFIs) are answered in a timely manner. To accomplish these tasks, the LNO may have to be a full time resident at the brigade TOC. A trend is that the LNO is an extra officer around the TF TOC who may have to scrounge a vehicle from the TF XO. By the time he returns from the brigade TOC with the OPORD, the TF has lost valuable parallel planning time, particularly in regard to reconnaissance and surveillance (R&S) planning. Most units have detailed LNO checklists in their tactical SOPs, but how many LNOs truly have that HMMWV and equipment under their control? Units should assign solid officers or NCOs as LNOs; equip them for success, and use division and corps CPXs as opportunities to train these duties and responsibilities.

The realities of USAREUR stationing can impede TF TOC team building because engineer and fire support element (FSE) components of the TF TOC may often be unavailable. It is a good idea to transport FSE and Engineer section vehicles to the unit station for a TF-level CPX at least quarterly. Additionally, weekly 'Sergeant's Time' is a prime staff training opportunity to train RTO procedures, TOC set-up (green, amber, red configurations), TOC displacement, key leader rehearsal site set-up, plans tent set-up, etc. Battalion commanders must require and enable the battalion XO to incorporate staff officers into this training by conducting MDMP drills away from the headquarters building and in the plans tent. In between inspecting line company training, battalion commanders must spend time receiving briefings from the staff at designated points during the MDMP. Battalion commanders can use these opportunities to practice delivering their guidance and molding their TOC to higher standards.

Units and CMTC must coordinate early and often to schedule Leader Training Program sessions. This will ensure the commander's training objectives are met. ULTP phase I is a two- to four-hour class on recent CMTC trends. It can be and should be much more. It needs to be a well thought out and planned event and a major part of the unit's CMTC train-up to mitigate the experience level of the Task Force staff. Likewise, for ULTP phases II and III to be more effective, they must be the primary focus of the TF staff during its execution. The habitual timing of phase III to coincide with deployment to CMTC causes TF staffs to divide their efforts. ULTP Phase III becomes an obvious distracter, because the TF has soldiers and equipment on roads and rails across Germany, and in some cases, across Europe. This Phase III model asks the lead TF commander to deploy his TF and conduct preparations for combat (D-day activities) without critical unit leaders present. Collectively, we must find a better training model so TF commanders and staffs can have a first-class training event.

Lastly, units must arrive at CMTC with a TOC training plan for the enhanced situational training exercise (E-STX) period. Often, TF commanders, XOs, and S3s are completely (and rightfully) consumed with training their companies on STX lanes, yet the TOC sits idle. This period is a prime training opportunity for the TOC; the OPS SGT must make the most of this time and conduct TOC battle drills.

Supply

Routinely, TF TOCs deploy to CMTC without authorized Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) items. These items may have been left behind at home station as either a deployment oversight or because the item was determined unnecessary. Examples of these items include camouflage netting, tentage (Standardized Integrated Command Post System (SICPS), sleeping tents, and plans tents), machine gun tripods, chemical alarms, space heaters, etc. Units should bring all MTOE items in order to put this equipment to use, as well as exercise unit deployment load

plans. In some instances, staff sections may be short MTOE equipment. This equipment may have migrated within HHC to another platoon/section, so that HHC sub-hand receipts do not match the staff section MTOE authorizations. The TF XO and S3 should review equipment authorizations, on-hand quantities and equipment shortages with the HHC commander, staff section NCOICs, and attached elements.

Units in USAREUR do not have field reproduction equipment at battalion level that their CONUS counterparts have. Units must regularly contract for local small, unreliable field copiers at CMTC merely for the duration of the exercise. This does not allow units to develop load plans. Additionally, units have no overlay reproduction capability below brigade level. The current status in this area should be deemed unacceptable within an LCD XXI task force in the year 2002.

Many TF TOCs do not have standardized load plans for each vehicle nor do TOC SOPs contain a standardized office supplies stockage level and load plan. Units should develop a fifteen-day stockage level in order to support actual deployment planning as well as support their force-on-force training. Once developed, this load plan must be resourced with supplies and inspected by unit leadership to ensure it is on-hand prior to deployment.

Finally, in reference to supplies, TF TOCs must arrive with a standardized configuration that includes map boards with appropriate maps, and information tracking boards. Tracking boards should allow for the various stages of a mission cycle to include planning, preparation, execution, and reconstitution. The types and criticality of information may change during this cycle. Task forces must use the TOC training discussed earlier to refine these charts as necessary. These information-boards should be fabricated locally or through established training support offices prior to deployment. Further, all TF CPs must likewise be resourced with an objective toward standardization between CPs; e.g., the combat trains command post (CTCP), the field trains command post (FTCP), and the jump TOC.

Maintenance

Generally, a battalion may have up to seven M577s, with another two added after task organization. Each of these M577s usually has a sole function: e.g., S3 or S2 vehicle, aid station, mortar fire direction center, or CTCP. A task force simply cannot afford to lose any of these vehicles through maintenance breakdown. Battalion commanders should have Battalion Maintenance Officers (BMOs) designate these vehicles (and associated generators) as command interest items at home station and track them as such in order to gain command visibility. During combat, these vehicles should be accorded a high priority of repair by the TF. TF CSS planners should specify this in the CSS annex of TF OPORDS

In some cases, TOC soldiers have not been properly trained in the conduct of preventative maintenance checks and services (PMCS) on TOC equipment. Soldiers may not have been properly licensed on TOC generators, which can have disastrous results in the middle of a TF OPORD brief. NCOs must properly supervise the conduct of PMCS during the rotation and follow the same TF standard 5988-E flow. TOCs can often be the worst offenders in the TF in this area.

Conclusion

As discussed, the level of preparation for combat operations and subsequent success of the TF TOC cannot be measured just in the staff's ability to conduct the MDMP within a certain time period. TOC internal friction due to lack of adequate forethought and preparation in many different, but interrelated areas can have a profound negative impact on the entire task force. In preparing for combat or a rotation to a combat training center, battalion leadership must conduct a holistic and realistic assessment of their CPs and then develop an overarching preparation and training plan. TF commanders must take a personal interest in their TOC operations. TF TOCs cannot be an afterthought. The TOC must have the best soldiers, NCOs, and officers in the TF and have the required equipment and time to train so as to enable the TF commander the freedom to command.

COMMAND LEADERSHIP IN PREPARATION FOR COMBAT

LTC Michael C. Cloy
CMTC, Timberwolf 07

Leadership is the Most Dynamic Element of Combat Power

As the Senior Leaders of Organizations, Commanders Apply the Leadership Element of Combat Power. Subordinate Commanders and Leaders Reinforce it.
FM 3-0 Operations 2001

You nailed it! As the task force commander, you took the time to deliberately visualize the upcoming fight, huddle with key leaders of your battle staff, and develop solid commander's planning guidance based on a clear and concise intent for maneuver and fires. The potential dividends are appreciable. You can sense that all energies are working towards your vision of the fight. The battle staff produced a timely and executable order. All of these Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) successes have enabled you to command your task force and for the first time your gut tells you that the soldiers will destroy the enemy in a unified and synchronized effort.

But how do you know you are not being lulled into a false sense of pre-battle assurance? How can you really know that your subordinate leaders know in detail how you want to destroy the enemy? How do you know they have crafted tactically sound supporting plans to the TF plan? How can you be assured that the main effort platoon leader of the main effort company really understands what you want done with maneuver and fires? The bottom line is you have to get out of the TOC and troop the line. You will only know if the plan is understood by talking to subordinate leaders and exercising command leadership.

I submit that TF commanders are challenged to apply command leadership in the preparation phase of combat at CMTC. They frequently squander valuable opportunities to personally check subordinate units and verify understanding of the plan to gain a truer sense of pre-battle readiness. Therefore, TF commanders are not fully executing the eighth step of the troop leading procedure: supervise and refine the plan.

Many of the ancillary reasons TF commanders are not able to apply command leadership have already been highlighted in the preceding article on TOC operations. In summary, untrained TF TOCs do not enable TF commanders to command their units. Untrained TF TOCs cause distractions for TF commanders that compete directly for valuable time that is better spent with leaders and soldiers. The result is predictably disastrous. Battle command is eroded well before commencement of combat operations. In the end, the TF commander's war fighting vision is often not fully understood by those who are responsible for its execution.

The purpose of this article is to help TF commanders remember how to better exercise command leadership on the battlefield.

The TF commander who wants to train on specific command leadership techniques and procedures for combat preparation operations will find Army doctrine lacking. Army doctrine emphasizes command leadership almost solely for the planning and execution phase of combat operations. FM 7-20 (The Infantry Battalion) comes the closest in addressing this subject of command leadership. FM 7-20 states:

> *Command leadership is personal and intangible; it is a combination of example, persuasion, and influence. It serves as an extension of the commander's self. Effective field commanders exhibit the following characteristics of leadership.*

a. Supervision and Standards
b. Technical and Tactical Proficiency
c. Time Management
d. Delegation
e. Decisiveness, (I submit focus)
f. Respect and Concern

Applying the FM 7-20 definition of command leadership, I will address each of these characteristics of leadership from a preparation for combat perspective under a battle command theme with a purpose of highlighting some techniques for consideration and potential application in the field.

Battle Command Applies the Leadership Element of Combat Power
FM 3-0, Operations 2001

Supervision and Standards

See Yourself–

- **Enforce Your Own Commander's Critical Information Requirements (CCIR).** Don't allow CCIR to be a *check-the-block* part of your guidance that never gets revisited. Be relentless with the TOC when CCIR are answered and you haven't been updated.
- **Personally Lead the Leaders Recon.** Make sure all the tools are gathered before leaving the TOC such as pickets, picket pounder, TRP markers, terra-based products, binos, pluggers, BFV or FIST-V with working laser, and maps.
- **Read the TF Operations Order in Its Entirety.** Look at the graphics. Hearing the operations order for the first time when it is delivered to your subordinate commanders is too late. If you don't fully read the OPORD, it will not be what you wanted and you will interrupt the orders process to fix the problem.
- **Attend the Main Effort Co / Tm Operations Order and Rehearsal.** Don't interrupt it. Advise and mentor the subordinate commander afterwards where he did not understand how he is going to fight his piece of your fight.
- **Check Your Crew.** Ensure they know the mission and that your turret is ready for you to command from. Check your map and graphics with the decision support template (DST). Check your wingman for the same standards.
- **Enforce the Rest Plan.** Know how much sleep your subordinate commanders have gotten. Announce over the net when you are going to sleep so others will feel free to do the same. If they need sleep, bring subordinate commanders to the TOC. Have them go to sleep at the TOC, so that in the morning they will be ready for the OPORD and have daylight to their favor.
- **Keep the TOC Informed of Command Decisions.** Always share with the TOC any agreements and/or changes that you have made to the plan. Conversations amongst commanders almost never make it back to the TOC and often have significant ramifications across the TF.
- **Maintain the Integrity of Your Rehearsals.** Know the difference between a confirmation brief, a back brief and a combined arms rehearsal (CAR). Enforce the elements of each. Recognize when the rehearsal has eroded and refocus your subordinates.
- **Use Back Briefs.** Never go into a TF rehearsal without conducting back briefs. This will help keep your rehearsal focused as an action and orders drill and not a wargaming session. Invite select staff to eavesdrop in order to better understand how each Co/Tm commander is going to fight his

piece of your fight. Back briefs should be done early enough so Co/Tm commanders can incorporate changes.

- **Talk to Platoon Leaders.** Have them restate your commander's intent for maneuver and fires, cold and without hesitation. Do the same for the engineer platoon leaders about your intent for obstacles.
- **Visit Alternate Command Posts.** If time permits, visit the logistical command posts, UMCP and CTCP. If not, have the CSM check. Look for uniformity in battle tracking status with the TOC.

See The Enemy –

- **Get Your Staff to Visualize Your Fight.** In the defense, get them out of the TOC. Have the S2, FSO and Eng Co Commander drive the terrain from the outside in and proof enemy avenues of approach and firing lines in relation to where you want to kill the enemy. 'Plugger in' all obstacle starting, mid and end points. 'Plugger in' technical and tactical triggers that support your essential fire support tasks (EFSTs). For the offense, have your recon elements draw a sketch of the enemy locations on a map and get it into your hands.
- **Empower, and if Necessary, Protect Your S2.** Don't allow other commanders and/ or staff, especially the field grades, to talk him out being the uncooperative enemy. Make him fight the enemy's fight as if he has ownership of the OPFOR plan.

See the Terrain –

- **Go to Where You Want to Kill the Enemy.** Physically show on the ground to the subordinate commanders and key staff where you want to kill the enemy. For offensive operations use a sighting system such as a FIST-V with a 13-power sight and lasing capability, and show each commander where you want to kill the enemy via the sighting system. If this is not feasible due to line of sight restrictions, then have the engineer XO print off terra-based products and use/give them to your commanders as you troop the line. For defensive operations, go to the place where you want to kill the enemy and plant a picket/TRP there. Have company commanders go to their battle positions and sight in on this picket/TRP or adjust accordingly until they can. Don't allow them to leave the recon until they confirm at a minimum that they can see where you want to kill the enemy. Have the S3 call the new battle position grids to the TOC.
- **Make a TF Fire Plan.** Use the Co/Tm fire plans to determine if you mass effects of your direct and indirect systems where you wanted to kill the enemy. Do this early on so if you discover that you don't have mass where you wanted it then you can make adjustments. The TF master gunner can do this.

Technical and Tactical Proficiency

See Yourself –-

- **Know the Effects not Just the Capabilities of All Weapon Systems in Your Task Organization (MILES included).** When trooping the line, check to see at what distance "killer" crews are killing. Determine what distance at which they are boresighting and then have the TF boresight at that distance for that weapons system.
- **Know What a Tactical and Technical Trigger is for Indirect Fires.** Have platoon leaders, or whoever has been delegated the task to call the fire mission, (this includes the alternate observers) demonstrate to you their "*battlefield calculus*" in the execution of those triggers.
- **Know the Breach Framework IAW FM 3-34.2 and Who Has Responsibility Within it.** Conduct a breaching back brief with the support, breach, and assault force commander. Be sure

everyone knows the conditions that must be established for each breaching fundamental. Be sure you define to the breach force commander who makes the decision to breach and what area he is responsible for. Be sure to have him tell you how he will execute SOSRA (suppress, obscure, secure, reduce, assault) within the breach force.

- **Know a Plow Tank's Capabilities and How it Operates.** Talk to each plow tank driver and see if he has marked his vision block with a choke sight to know that he is a hundred meters from the breach. Look at his latest PMCS on the plow and see if it is operational.
- **Know What a MICLIC is, it's Effects and How it's Employed. (Mine Clearing Line Charge)** Talk to the engineer responsible for preparing the rocket charge and see if he is using the TM.
- **Know the Capabilities of MOPMs (Modular Pack Mine System) and Remote Control Units (RCUs).** Check to see if those situational obstacles that are critical to mission accomplishment are properly sited in and those responsible for the RCU know the trigger. Check to see if those units in the TF that may encounter them (reserve forces) know their locations and durations.
- **Know the Capabilities of a Volcano scatterable mine system.** Check to see if the 'fratricide fence' is to standard. Again, check to see if those who need to know the location of the minefield actually know where it is.
- **Know What a 1355-R is, What it is Used For, and How (If it is Being Used).** Check platoon leaders to see if they have the 'dirty battlefield' overlay.
- **Know How to Fill and Load a Secure Net in a Radio.** You just might have to do this if your crew is out of action and or you have to jump to another vehicle that doesn't normally operate on the TF command net.
- **Know the Direct Fire Weapons Control Status.** This is not just a live fire control measure. Have Co/Tm commanders tell you their weapon control status during the combined arms rehearsal.
- **Know How Air Defense Platoons Mass Fires.** Check the ADA platoon leader to see if he knows what you want protected and why. Remember, ADA platoons can't be everywhere and one Stinger is just a terrorist.

See The Enemy –

- **Know OPFOR Fighting Doctrine**. Know where the OPFOR commander has to make tactical decisions on the ground. Express that to your subordinate commanders on a map. Have them do the same for you and identify where their counterpart commander must make tactical decisions.

See the Terrain –

- **Personally Learn How to Operate Terra Base.**
- **Have FISTs and platoon leaders describe on the ground where and how their technical and tactical triggers work as they relate to your TF EFSTs.**

Time Management

See Yourself –

- **Protect Your Time.** Share with your XO, CSM, S3, driver and crew who has direct access to you and get their help to protect you from interruptions.
- **Share Your Timeline With the Bde Commander.** Agree well in advance with the Bde Commander on when specific elements of the Bde TLP should or should not occur to avoid shortchanging your time with your leaders and soldiers.

See The Enemy –

- **Know the Enemy's Timeline for Critical Actions/Decisions.** Stay abreast of the enemy timeline in terms of capabilities and tactical situation and change your readiness posture accordingly.

See the Terrain –

- **Be a Student of the Terrain.** Take a good hour and study the terrain on the map. Look for mobility corridors that will provide you and/or the enemy flexibility. Think about situational and conventional obstacles and how to shape the battlefield.

Delegation

See Yourself –

- **Prepare Your S3 for the Fight.** Have your TF S3 attend a supporting unit operations order and rehearsal. Have the CSM attend one as well. Meet with them and share info. Remember, no interruptions.
- **Develop Future First Sergeants.** Have your CSM talk to platoon sergeants and ask them to state your intent for fires and maneuver with assistance of written aids.
- **Have your XO develop a standard rehearsal script to be briefed by each participant of the TF CAR.** Ensure the XO and S3 have visible, integrated roles in the rehearsal.
- **Rely On and Leverage CSM Expertise.** Have the CSM brief what he sees as the junior leader issues for the fight during the OPORD.
- **Delegate Responsibility to Your Staff for Battle Tracking Each Requirement Listed in This Article.** You need to conduct some TTPs yourself, but the TOC can assist on many of these TTPs. However, you must tell them which ones to battle track.

See The Enemy –

- **Reconnaissance and Counter-reconnaissance is a MEL 4 Task.** Ensure a field grade officer is tracking the counter recon and/or recon fight. These fights are too complicated for a company commander to synchronize and battle track.

See the Terrain –

- **In The Defense, Select Your Fighting Position Based on Where You Can Sense the Fight.** Have your crew and wingman rehearse occupation of your fighting position.

Decisiveness (I submit focus)

See Yourself –

- **Give Command Updates Regularly.** Based on answered or unanswered CCIR, announce a specific time during the prep phase to state across the TF command net how you think the prep for the offense / defense is going and make adjustments accordingly. Always speak in terms of task and purpose.
- **Be Directive On the Leaders Recon**. Don't allow Co/Tm Commanders to distract you with their concepts of operation, especially since they haven't even received an order yet. Co/Tm Cdrs can brief you on how they intend on carrying out your vision of the fight after you have given it to them.
- **Conduct a Pre-Battle Update.** Prior to the battle, either conduct an FM update or meet commanders on the ground to update them on your updated vision of the fight.

See The Enemy –

- **Focus on the Enemy's Vulnerabilities.** Have the S2 repeat, as he did for you in the mission analysis brief, where the enemy is most vulnerable for both the most dangerous and most likely courses of action during the operations order. If possible, give grids.
- **Give Specified Destruction Criteria to Co/Tm Commanders.** When trooping the line, see if they have given this destruction criterion to their platoons and see if they have refined it to support yours.
- **Check Co/Plt and Crew Graphics.** Check for the probable line of contact and/or deployment actually drawn on the map. Ask the platoon leader and/or crew what their actions will be at this point on the ground and why. For the defense, talk their fire plan. Ask where their maximum engagement line is, their target destruction criteria, and have them give you their fire commands.

See the Terrain –

- **Specify Why a Particular Piece of Terrain is Important.** If the mission is terrain oriented, then tell subordinate commanders by grid specifically where and why you want the terrain. When trooping the line, check to see if platoon leaders and soldiers know this information.

Respect and Concern

See Yourself –

- **Award Excellence on the Spot.** When trooping the line, recognize combat excellence on the battlefield with impact awards.
- **Train Predictability.** Develop a standard "battle rhythm" that enables your subordinate leaders to fully use their preparation time.
- **Write Your Own Risk Assessment.** If you delegate it, read, sign and brief it at the operations order just like you do with your intent. Make sure the CSM echoes your thoughts with his current operations safety briefing.

Obviously, you cannot exercise all of these command leadership TTPs for each mission. There simply isn't enough time. These serve mainly as a menu to remind TF commanders of some of the areas they need to check. They are not exhaustive, either.

It is recognized that command leadership is personal and intangible. However, you, as the TF Commander, must find ways to define and apply the leadership element of combat power throughout all phases of planning, preparation and execution. You cannot allow yourself to be pulled away from those you lead during the preparation for combat phase and expect that your TF will magically accomplish the mission. You must find ways to exercise the art of supervision to see if subordinate commanders and leaders know and have reinforced your warfighting vision. Your mere presence forward inspecting your soldiers will have a significant impact on their performance. Imagine the dividend if you talk to them about how they will be successful in executing your fight.

"I used to say of Napoleon that his presence on the field made the difference of forty thousand men."
-Duke of Wellington